THE UPWARD STRUGGLE OF WAGES AND PRICES

Interesting Results of Recent Investigations of the Federal Bureau of Labor.

Does prosperity pay?

This is the question people ask themselves when they note the mounting of prices for the necessaries of life. The federal bureau of labor has kept track of these matters for sixteen years and is able to report that prices never were so high in the history of its investigations, as they were in the year 1905. It is the purpose of the bureau to continue these studies and to give the public the benefit of a wider range of research each year.

The prices studied by the bureau include thirty staple articles, ranging from meat to prunes. In twenty-three of the thirty, prices were higher in 1905 than in 1904, and the price of every article except coffee and prunes was higher in 1905 than in 1896, the year of lowest prices during the past sixteen.

The average prices of wheat bread butter, cheese, chickens, corn meal, eggs, fresh fish, salt fish, mutton and veal were higher in 1905 than in any other of the sixteen-year period.

The advance in bacon has been 43.5 per cent; Irish potatoes, 43.1 per cent; eggs, 41.8 per cent; fresh pork, 30 per cent; flour, 29.3, and so on thru the list.

The advance in price of food, when each of the articles is given a weight according to its consumption in the family of the workingman, has been 0.6 per cent since 1904, 17.7 per cent since 1896 and 12 per cent when compared with the average of the decade, 1890 to 1899.

In making these investigations the bureau tried to secure as fair an average as possible by drawing its statistics from a large number of states, taking the principal cities in each state and consulting a number of merchants in each locality. As far as possible, prices for 1905 were obtained from the same merchants who had been quoted in the previous bulletins. The schedules were in all cases obtained in personal visits of the bureau's agents. The following table, taken from the computations of the bureau, shows the relative prices of some of the staples compared with average prices for the ten-year period. Calling the ten years prices 100, the increases or decreases are shown in the table on that scale:

	1902.	1904.	1905.
Dried apples	104.4	99.2	106.0
Dry beans	116.8	116.8	116.3
Beef, fresh roasts	118.6	112.8	112.2
Beef, fresh steaks	118.5	113.4	112.0
Wheat bread	99.4	103.4	104.5
Butter	111.5	109.0	112.7
Cheese	107.3	107.4	110.9
Chickens	113.2	120.7	123.6
Coffee	89.6	91.8	93.6
Eggs	119.1	130.9	131.6
Fresh fish	105.0	107.9	109.9
Wheat flour	94.9	119.9	119.9
Lard	134.3	117.3	116.6
Fresh milk, unskimmed	103.3	106.3	107.0
Mutton	114.7	114.1	117.8
Fresh pork	128.3	124.0	126.6
Irish potatoes	117.0	121.3	110.2
Prunes	83.4	79.6	81.4
Rice	103.5	101.6	102.6
Sugar	96.0	101.9	103.9
Tea	107.2	105.8	105.7

These figures mean that on the average the dollar that goes over the counter of the store for food or food stuffs has shrunk as compared with the dollar that went over the same counter in 1896, to 83 cents. But it does not mean, as is claimed by some eastern publications, that where the working man in 1896 paid $6 a week to set his table, he now pays $10. This is mere guesswork. If he sets his table on the same scale as before, the average increase has been 17 cents in the dollar. But there have been other increases. The cost of fuel has gone up. This has been due largely to labor troubles in the coal fields, to necessary increases in the cost of production and partly to the abnormal appetite of the trusts that control the coal at bases of supply. To earn dividends on increased capitalization they have increased the selling price of coal at tidewater. But the retailer of coal in Minneapolis is making relatively less than he did before. His profit on a ton of coal is about what it was ten years ago and it takes considerably more capital to handle it.

There has also been an increase in the rent account. What that increase has been in Minneapolis, it is difficult to get an accurate account. One rental agent who has a large list says there

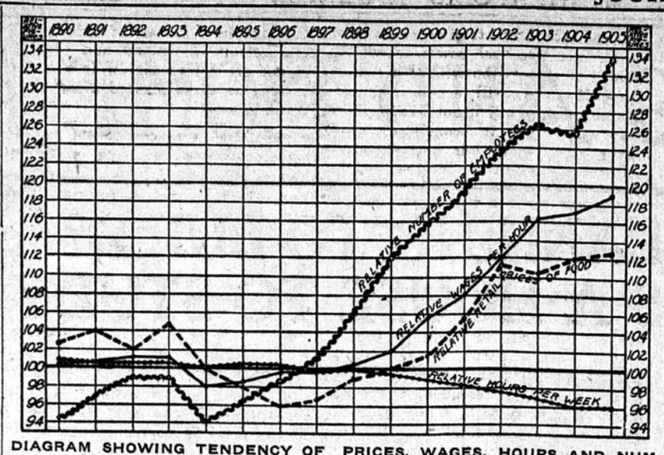

DIAGRAM SHOWING TENDENCY OF PRICES, WAGES, HOURS AND NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES FOR THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS.

has been practically no increase in rents except in steam-heated flats which are at a premium. The new ones built do not appear to relieve the congestion because people are not contented to live in the houses that satisfied them ten years ago. If they were, they would not notice the increase in rent much if at all. Improved style of living in all classes accounts for whatever increase there has been in rents, except what is charged to extra cost of construction, which applies almost exclusively to the newer places.

Clothing also costs more. This is the natural result of the increase in wages to operatives in cloth mills and to the demand for better fabrics. Men's clothing has not advanced much. First-class tailoring costs from $5 to $10 more upon a suit than it did before the boom, but the ready-made clothing is still sold at prices not materially differing from those of 1902 and 1904.

Shoes, particularly men's shoes, have not advanced. This is due somewhat to the standard of price and quality, widely advertised by a number of great manufacturers. They are unable to get away from their standard prices, because they have made them so public, nor can they let the quality deteriorate materially without killing their business. So men's shoes are not to be included in the great advance in the cost of living.

Women's garments have advanced in two ways. The price of the material has gone up and it takes more yards to make them than before. There has been advance also in the cost of dressmaking. But the dressmakers claim they are making no more than they did formerly. They say the whole difference goes into the cost of labor, that expert seamstresses are more difficult to get every day.

The same story of the scarcity of skilled labor is told everywhere. In Minneapolis even odd job men can scarcely be had at any price. People who live in the suburbs pay dearly for everything they have done and when a plasterer comes to chink up some breaks in the walls he wants a mortgage on the place in exchange for his work. Wages of house servants have advanced in this part of the country until they are nearly double what they were ten years ago.

Altogether the lot of the householder is not a happy one. But there is a contra account. The wages of labor have advanced materially. The bureau which investigated the price of foods, also looked into the labor account and it makes a gratifying showing for the country. America has traveled a long way from 1896, when Bryan and McKinley were contending for the presidency, the one demanding the opening of the mints, the other the opening of the mills. The mills have been opened and the mints as well since that time, and instead of Coxey's armies traveling across the country, we have industrial parades of employed men.

The true test of prosperity is whether the results have been equitably distributed over the population. Swollen fortunes have come with prosperity, but prosperity has come to the working man also. The bureau makes this clear in its discussion of wages. Of course such an investigation must be limited in its scope, and this one did not include transportation, agriculture and other important groups. But fortunately there have been remarkable increases in the wages of men on the railroads, some very prominent ones within a few weeks. It is also known that farm labor is scarce and highly paid.

The results of the investigation show that in 1905 the average wages per hour in the principal manufacturing and mechanical industries of the country were 1.6 per cent higher than in 1904; that the average hours of labor remained the same and that 6.3 per cent more persons were employed in the establishments investigated. As there was an increase in the number employed, as well as in the average wage per hour, it follows that there was an increase in the total weekly earnings. This increase was 8 per cent.

The average wage per hour in 1905 was 18.9 per cent higher than the average for the ten-year period from 1890 to 1899. The average hours of labor a week were 4.1 per cent lower.

When the figures of the investigation of wages and prices are brought together, they show that, while the average price of food increased 0.6 per cent between 1904 and 1905, the average wage increased a little more, so that the purchasing power of the dollar increased in the intervening twelve months. Besides, there was a great deal more labor employed.

The struggle between wages and prices has been a close one. The battle is still on and while the average method of getting at the matter shows a comfortable margin favorable to wages, this does not comfort the man who has not been fortunate enough to secure an increase or whose earning power has decreased. He has had to accept the hardships of prosperity without its benefits. He has met fate. But averages and evolutions do not concern themselves with the individual.

Balance Rock.

In a strip of woodland among the slopes of the Berkshire hills near the city of Pittsfield, Mass., can be seen a strange phenomenon. It is a massive boulder weighing about 170 tons perched upon a bed of rock of Berkshire limestone—of entirely different formation—in such a way as to appear to be delicately balanced on its small base. The boulder is, in fact, known as "Balance Rock." It is a well-known fact that golden grain belt beer is not only the purest of all beverages, but also the most beneficial to body and mind. A trial will convince you.

DIVINE VENGEANCE IS SEEN IN DEATH

Bailiff Drops Dead When Threatened by a Sick Child Whose Father He Would Evict.

Special Cable to The Journal.

Warsaw, Dec. 22.—In a small country town not far from Warsaw a death has just occurred, under dramatic and sensational circumstances, which has made a profound impression on the peasantry thruout the country. They are convinced that it was the result of a miracle, and that a young girl was the agent thru whom divine vengeance was wrought.

It appears that the local squire, like many of his kind, fell upon evil days and was obliged to borrow a sum of money on mortgage. But owing to agrarian riots, cattle disease, bad crops and a host of minor misfortunes, he was unable to pay the interest on the money for some time. The mortgagee, a woman, by the way, determined to evict her debtor from his estate, and charged a bailiff to perform that unpleasant duty.

When the bailiff arrived at the manor, he was met by the squire, who besought him, with tears in his eyes, to give a few days' grace, as his 10-year-old daughter was just recovering from a bad attack of scarlet fever and it would mean death if she was turned out into the fields in the raw November weather. But the bailiff refused, saying that he was acting under his client's orders, who had told him not to delay a single day no matter what excuses were made.

"But this is not an excuse," protested the distracted father. "If my prayers cannot move you perhaps the sight of my suffering child will."

Goes Into Sick Room.

Still protesting that he could do nothing to postpone the eviction, the bailiff followed the squire into the sickroom. When the child saw him and learned why he had come, she raised her pale, thin face from the pillow and looking at him with wild eyes, said in a trembling voice:

"You have ruined my father and mother, and now you're going to turn me out of my home to die! God will most surely punish you for such wickedness!"

No sooner had she uttered these words than the bailiff turned pale, staggered and fell fate forwards on the ground. When picked up he was found to be dead.

The incident has created the greatest sensation, not only in the district, but thruout the country. The peasants and the workingmen solemnly explain it by the words, "To cud" ("It's a miracle").

It was with the greatest difficulty that the frightened farm servants could be persuaded to carry the dead bailiff out of the room. At first none of them would touch it, declaring that the man had died under God's curse. They look upon the squire's child, however, with peculiar veneration, as one by whom God has chosen to work a miracle.

FAMILY BLOWN TO ATOMS

Alchemist Causes Explosion While Showing Nugget He Had Made.

Paris, Dec. 22.—M. Capel, a distinguished chemist and alchemist, who has long been trying to manufacture gold, brought about the death of himself and his entire family just when he believed that he had solved the golden riddle.

M. Capel has recently hinted to several people that he had made an important discovery in his experiments at gold production, and he wrote to his brother saying that he believed he was on the way towards solving the problem.

He called his wife and three children into his laboratory at Pomet last night, and showed them what appeared to be a nugget of gold.

He was explaining to them the process he had used, when he inadvertently pushed a basin containing some gunpowder too near the lamp. A terrific explosion followed, blowing up the entire laboratory and leaving it a heap of ruins.

Neighbors rushed to the rescue, and with great difficulty were able to recover the shattered bodies of the alchemist, his wife, and three children. The wife was still able to speak, but she died on her way to the hospital. The alchemist has left no trace of his secret discovery.

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On Dec. 20 to 25; 30 and 31; and Jan. 1, 1907, the Burlington Route will sell tickets to all points on its lines at
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good until Jan. 7, 1907, for return.
Note the liberal return limit.
For further information call or phone.
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POTTS DISEASE when treated in time at this institution, will result in no deformity; paralysis will always be prevented; the health and strength of the patient is at once improved; the growth not interfered with. Plaster paris is never used.
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HIP DISEASE can be cured without surgical operations or confining the patient to bed. Abscesses, shortening deformity and loss of motion should always be prevented, and, if already present, can usually be cured. The methods used here in the cure of Hip Diseases in all its stages are radically different and more successful than those generally employed. Write for information.
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YOUR LAST CHANCE

Here is a partial list of the thousands of sensible Christmas Presents we are showing—any one of which would be highly prized: Music Cabinet, Piano Bench, Morris Chair, Fancy Rocker, Turkish Leather Rocker, Leather Couch, Tabourette, Jardinier Stand, Bookcase, Pedestal, Cellarette, Card Table, Tea Table, Magazine Rack, Rattan Rocker, Footstool, Sewing Table, Writing Desk, Cut Glass, Jardinier, Electrolier, Gas Lamp, Electric Dinner Set, Tea Set, Service Plate, Fish or Game Set, Statuary, Clock, German Stein, Silverware, Chafing Dish, Couch Cover, Lace Curtains, Portieres, etc., etc.

PRICES HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN REDUCED LIKE THIS:

Young people going to housekeeping receive special terms and attention.

Special Discount to Clubs and Employes on Presentation Gifts.

Wall Pocket, 50c

Made of oak; has mirror in front, on sale from 8 to 10 a. m. Monday only. Worth $1.25. While they last, only.....50c
One to a customer.

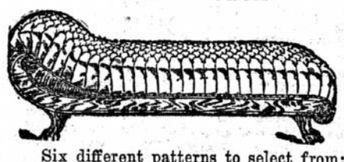
Morris Chair

Mission Morris Chair, weathered oak; moss cushions, upholstered with genuine velour, worth $12. Special for Monday only...$6.50
100 Morris Chairs at $9 $12 $15 $18 and $20.

Shaving Case

Gent's Shaving Case — golden oak, mahogany or weathered oak; place for cup; swinging glass, with a French bevel plate mirror. This sale only.....$2.50

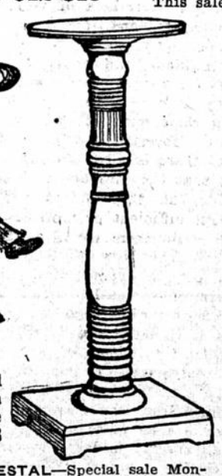
Velour Couch



Six different patterns to select from; plain or tufted top, oak frame, polish finish, large size; the celebrated Karpen construction, worth from $15 to $18. Your choice while they last, only.....$9.95
Leather couches at $40 $45 $50 $60 and $65.

Cellarettes

Nothing would be more appreciated by a gentleman. We have them in weathered and golden oak and genuine mahogany, at $9 $12.75 $15 $18 $20 $25 up to $75.



PEDESTAL—Special sale Monday of 100 mahogany, golden and weathered oak pedestals at $5, $6, $7, $9, $12, $15, $18 $20 and $25.

Desk

Golden oak, quartered-sawed, polish finish, hand carved; 39 inches high, 32 inches deep; one large drawer; all partitioned off in the inside. A strictly high grade desk and worth $30. Special for this sale, only.....$15.00

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Turkish Rocker

Karpen construction, covered with best quality genuine leather, upholstered with hair and moss; best steel springs; celebrated Harrington springs; worth $60. Special for Monday, only.....$35
$5 down and $1 a week.

Music Cabinet

Genuine Circassian Black Walnut; full swell front, carved; 42 inches high, 21 inches wide; polish finish, worth $32. Special for this sale only.....$15
50 Music Stands for $27 to $35

Hall Rack

Weathered and golden oak, polish finish, four strong double hooks and 11x11 French bevel plate mirror. Worth $5. This sale only.....$2.95

Fancy Rocker

Fine selected quarter oak or birch mahogany finish, upholstered seat, covered with genuine leather, worth every cent of $14. This one-day sale for..$7.50

BOUTELL BROTHERS

Defective Page